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TO READERS.

All the former NUMBERS, from No. 15 to 24, are reprinted, and may be had at the Office, No. 192, Strand, upon application. The wholesale price is 12s. 6d. a hundred, and, if a thousand copies be regularly taken by persons *in the country*, the price is 11s. a hundred.—Letters with Orders must be *post paid*.—The clear profit upon 100, sold by retail, is, 4s. 2d. and, upon 1,000, if taken in the Country regularly, is, 2l. 16s. 8d.—It is desirable to have large, wholesale sellers, in the country, who will take thousands a week and supply others *who retail round about*.—If any persons, disposed to do this, will address themselves, *postage paid*, to the publisher, their propositions will be attended to.—I have heard of various *unfair means*, made use of by our enemies in the country, to prevent the circulation of the Register. No wonder; for they justly dread the effect of the people hearing those *truths*, which have been kept from them for so many years. At ROMSEY, in Hampshire, particular pains have been taken in this way. The keepers of public-houses have by busy persons been frightened for their *licences*. A bookseller, who sold the Register, was scared by threats of loss

of the custom of our enemies. In the same town a foolish and lying paper, at a *penny*, has been printed and hawked about the country in *opposition* to me. LORD PALMERSTON, the *Secretary at War*, lives close by ROMSEY, and the people impute these things to him; but, though, I dare say, Lord Palmerston wishes the Register and its author both at Old Nick, I do not believe him capable of acting so mean, so base, so cowardly, so infamous a part. No: these acts must have been committed by some dirty wretch, who is seeking to get an office. I should, however, like to know the *names and characters and callings* of these wretches, that I may expose them. In the meanwhile I assure our good and honest friends *in the Country*, that though the blood-suckers call my little book *seditions*, it contains *no sedition*, no *libel*, and that I will answer with my life for the *lawfulness* of every word of it. It is lawful for any one to sell it. Several persons have been *threatened* to be prosecuted under the *Hawker's and Pedlar's Act* for hawking my little book. I will, therefore, explain this matter. All Hawkers and Pedlars must have a *licence*. But in the FIRST PLACE, any one may sell *any thing* in a *Market Town* on the *Market Day*, without any *licence*. SECONDLY,

B E

all "*printed papers, licensed by Authority,*" may be hawked about without a licence; and, this paper of mine is licensed by authority now, as much as news-papers are, seeing that I have now paid a tax for it at the Stamp-Office in London. This was not the case with the *open-sheets*; but, even in that case, the thing has *always* been permitted by the government; and it is well known, that *Last-Dying Speeches* and numerous other papers have *always* been permitted to be hawked about. Nay, the *penny papers* in opposition to me, are permitted at this moment. An impudent fellow at Lymington, who was asked by some of the people, why he dared to hawk *them*, if *mine* could not be hawked, said, that "*the government would protect him.*" My readers may be sure that this is false. The government would not be guilty of such base partiality and injustice, though some wretches, who wish to get into favour and to fatten upon the people, may wish it.—So that there is *no danger* from the law. Any one may sell, at any time, and in any place, or in any manner.—Those who sell by retail ought to fold the Register, that the purchasers may have them ready to begin reading, and, before beginning to read, the reader should stick a pin in the middle of the back of the book to hold the leaves together when they are cut open.—Thus each Number will be a nice little handy book of itself; and,

as the pages will be marked by figures, the several Numbers, when put together at the end of a certain time, will make a tolerably thick book, which a man may read over and over again, and it will serve his children to read as they grow up, and thus will they be well informed as to their rights and duties as well as their fathers and mothers. And, why should they not? Why should they be ignorant of those rights and duties? Have not the Labourers, as well as their employers, liberties and lives to defend? Do they not mainly assist to fight the battles of their country by sea and land? Are they not called out to serve in the militia and local militia? Have they not wives and children whom they love to see happy? Have they not arms to fight and to labour, and have they not minds to understand, and hearts to feel?—Have they not a right to happiness, and shall I be accused of *sedition*, because I endeavour, to the best of my humble abilities, to point out to them how to obtain and secure that happiness?

To those Gentlemen, who have taken the trouble to forward me, by letter, the copies of *Votes of Thanks*, I beg to return my best acknowledgements. I am particularly gratified by a vote passed at SHEFFIELD, concluding with an expression of "a



“conviction, that, in the late tumult,
 “in this town, the influence of Mr.
 “CORBETT’s excellent advice, which
 “had been so generally read, pre-
 “vented the multitude from pro-
 “ceeding to any serious acts of Riot,
 “to which they were frequently in-
 “cited by disorderly persons.”

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN,

*Showing that their only remaining choice
 is between Parliamentary Reform and
 Total Ruin.*

London, 20th Dec. 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

Innumerable are the instances in private life where men blindly and pertinaciously listen to those who are their worst enemies, who are undermining their characters and their fortunes, and who are fattening at their expence, while, towards those who are naturally as well as by inclination their friends, they wear an eye of constant suspicion, and entertain a feeling nearly approaching to that of enmity. That this failing, which is so common amongst individuals, is not without its influence on whole bodies of men, the conduct of the Country Gentlemen of these Islands, for many years past, most abundantly proves. And, as such conduct in private life seldom fails to produce ruin to the party, or his family; so, in your case, total ruin to yourselves, or, at least, to your descendants, appears to be a consequence altoge-

ther inevitable, unless you immediately rouse yourselves, shake off the infatuation, and act as becomes men who have children whom they do not wish to become beggarly dependents.

Amongst the other marks of this fatal infatuation, is, an obstinate refusal not only to follow the advice of those who propose a Reform of the Parliament, or who disapprove of the measures of the government; but, a refusal equally obstinate to hear what they have to say. A stubborn, a stupid, a contemptible obstinacy, to give way to which is justly punishable with ruin and disgrace. And, indeed, instead of patiently hearing what we have to say, no small part of you have repaid our endeavours with every species of persecution within your power. You have shown no sense of justice in these matters. You have not heard *both sides*, as common fairness pointed out; but have suffered yourselves to be led along by Corruption’s sons, as an ass is led by a gipsy; you have spitefully kicked at every man who has endeavoured to set you free; and even now, when your backs are breaking under your burdens, and your bones are sticking through your skins, you appear to feel a new *fit of alarm* at the proposition of that measure, which alone can, by any possibility, afford you relief and security.

Under such circumstances, it is almost impossible for us so far to master our resentment as to entertain a desire that you should now act the part that becomes you; but, to harbour such resentment would be to injure the great cause of the country, and it is, therefore, our duty to bury it, if possible, in everlasting oblivion. For my own part, bred up in the country, and

taught in early life to look towards your order with great respect; remembering the times when your hospitality and benevolence had not been swept away by the tax-gatherer; having still in my recollection so many excellent men, to whose grandfathers, upon the same spots, my grandfathers had yielded cheerful obedience and reverence, it is not without sincere sorrow that I have beheld many of the sons of these men driven from their fathers' mansions, or holding them as little better than tenants or stewards, while the swarms of Placemen, Pensioners, Contractors, and Nabobs, with all the keen habits of their former lives, have usurped a large part of the soil, and wholly changed the manners and even the morals of the country. Upon this occasion, I wish to address you in the temper inspired by the recollection of early impressions, rather than in that which recent facts would naturally dictate. For more than ten years I have been endeavouring to convince you, that that which has now taken place would take place. I have hitherto, with regard to you, laboured in vain; and, one more effort, though it should prove equally useless, will form but a trifling addition to the disappointments already experienced.

My opinion is, that you have now no choice remaining, except that which lies between a *Reform of Parliament* and the *loss of your estates* through the means of taxation; and the soundness of this opinion I will, if you will give me a patient hearing, endeavour to prove in the clearest manner.

Let me first ask you a question or two applicable to this matter. Look, each of

you, just around your own neighbourhoods. Take a circumference of thirty or forty miles. Put all the Gentlemen's mansions within that compass down upon paper. Write against each who was the owner *thirty years ago*, and who is the owner *now*. And then tell me, what reason *you* have to hope, that *your sons* will possess your estates? If you have any love for your children, can you take this survey without experiencing the most poignant anguish? Then, look at the numerous little farm-houses tumbling down, or suffered to dwindle into wretched sheds for labourers. Look at the outstretchings of the Metropolis, and see the increase of glittering chariots that rattle through its streets and squares; then turn to the places where numerous hamlets once stood inhabited by happy people; and, then tell me, whether the accumulation of property into great masses, by the means of taxes and loans, have been for the glory or the disgrace of the country? Search the poor-books of fifty years back, and, when you find but *one pauper* for every *hundred paupers* that now are upon those books, tell me whether you can behold the horrid sight without shame for the present and apprehension for the future? The sons of Corruption would fain induce you to believe, that this dreadful change has been produced by a change in the *morals* and *manners* of the labouring people. This is not a very decent charge to make against them at the close of a war, during which those classes have shown so much valour, and have endured with patience so many and such great hardships. But the fact is, that there is *less drunkenness* than formerly; the la-

bourers work harder than their forefathers worked; and, it surely will not be denied, that they are *better educated*, if by education we mean reading and writing. What, then, can have caused the poor-rates to rise, during the sway of the Pitts and the Roses, from *two millions and a quarter* to *eight millions* a year? What can have been the cause of this increase of human degradation? It is useless, besides being unjust, to rail against the poor. It is clear, that they *ought* to be fed, that they have both a *legal* and *equitable* right to be fed out of the produce of the soil; but, it is also clear, that they *must* be so fed. They never *can* be made to die by thousands quietly under the hedges; and, if they *could*, the evil would be still greater; for then there would be nobody to labour, and the country would become again a wilderness.

It is impossible for you to dwell upon reflections of this kind for ten minutes without being convinced, that there is some great, radical cause of all these evils. And, does it not become you, then, patiently to investigate that cause? If you, however unreasonably, have imbibed a dislike of the person who now addresses you; if you have been addicted, however unjustly, to rail against his motives; if you still think him actuated by mischievous designs, even that opinion ought not, unless you prefer self-destruction to self-preservation, to shut your ears against his *reasonings*, which can belong to no family or name, which must be either *true* or *false*, whether they come from him or any body else; thus to shut your ears would be to act as foolish a part as the refusing of a guinea because

tendered to you by a man against whom you happened to have a grudge. If you had a bad opinion of the man who tendered the guinea, you would examine very carefully to ascertain whether it was *gold*; you would weigh it to see whether it was *weight*: but, if you found it of pure quality and of full quantity, you never would be so foolish as to refuse to put it into your pocket.

But, at the present day, there is another and most important reason for your lending a patient ear; for your examining and well weighing what is tendered to you, which reason is this: that your farmers, your tradespeople, your workmen of all sorts are *very attentively reading* upon these subjects. It is quite useless for you to endeavour to discourage and check the progress of political knowledge. That knowledge has gone forth like the rays of the sun bursting a black cloud asunder; and, it is as impossible to destroy the effect of that knowledge as it would be to smother the rays of the sun. Even *error*, when strongly imprinted on the mind, has always been found extremely difficult to efface. What, then, is to efface *truth*, when imprinted on the mind in fair and distinct characters? "*The lower classes*," as they are called by the sons of Corruption, appear, to some, to have become enlightened *all of a sudden*. They have, indeed, *put forth* their proofs of knowledge all of a sudden; but, the truth is, that they have long been *acquiring* that knowledge. They have been patiently and impartially listening; they have been reading attentively what you have been turning your eyes from; and now that the times call them forth, they astonish you with their

political learning. You must, therefore, if it be only in your own defence, now resort to the same sources. It is useless for you, in conjunction with the Pittite Parsons, to shut the *light* out of Reading Rooms and great Booksellers' shops. It makes its way through the country in spite of your and their threats. It has been, by a singular process, shut out of Mess-Rooms and Ward-Rooms. But all these measures have only served to keep the higher or richer classes in political ignorance, while the middle and lower classes, as you call them, have been acquiring light, and improving in knowledge. The mass of information which has been discovered at the several public-meetings seems quite surprizing. The Mayors, Provosts, Boroughreeves, and others, who have refused to call public meetings, imagined, I dare say, that the *people* were nothing of *themselves*. They have found their mistake by this time, and they must have been ready to gnaw their very fingers off to see the accounts of those proceedings, which have been published, and in which a degree of talent and of wisdom has appeared, surpassing, and very far surpassing, any thing that was ever before brought forth at Public Meetings in this or any other country. At Nottingham, the Corporate Body, like men of sense, have cordially acted with the people; but, at Manchester, Wigan, Boston, Lynn, Glasgow, Paisley, Renfrew, and divers other places, all persons in authority have either thrown obstacles in the way, or have, at the very least, refused, to participate. This, however, has not at all held the people in check. They know their rights, and they have come

forward and exercised them with talent and spirit, and, at the same time, with the greatest possible prudence. Must not the natural consequence be, that the people will drop that respect for the rich which they have hitherto entertained?—And, is not this a most awful warning to the *Country Gentlemen*? Must they not see in these instances a proof, that, unless *they* place themselves at the head of the people, in the work of Reform, the people will find leaders amongst their own body? Must they not see even a *greater danger*; must they not see, that, if they still keep aloof, they will, at last, become objects, not altogether of contempt, but also of *resentment*? When the rich and the powerful of both the political factions united met in the open air at MAIDSTONE to propose an address to the Prince on the Marriage of his Daughter, they had no more idea of an opposition from the *people* than they had of an opening of the earth beneath them. What must have been their “*surprize* and *regret*,” when they found the people, not that shouting, hazzaing rabble that followed Old Blucher about the streets, but a well-informed body, who saw to the bottom of the subject, who knew how to trace their own sufferings down from the grants of public-money, and who, having spirit equal to their understanding, hissed the rich and powerful addressers from the open air into a room in a tavern! Will not instances like these satisfy you, that the time is arrived for you to show yourselves? If they will not, you must be in more than Egyptian darkness.

But, and this brings me to the main point as concerns you, what do the peo-

ple ask for? They do not ask for any one thing, in the obtaining of which *you* are not as deeply interested as they are. They do not ask for your *property to be taken from you*; they do not ask for your *rents to be reduced*. On the contrary, they ask for that which would prevent your total ruin and the annihilation of your very names. Your conduct is most surprising, and not to be accounted for upon any supposition short of that of the existence of an almost self-devotion to destruction. You have seen a law passed to make a tax on your land *perpetual*; then, upon the back of that, you have seen another passed, under the name of a *redemption of that tax*, to make you purchase the tax, or to enable the government to *sell it to any body else*. And, thus, you have been compelled to purchase back part of your own estates, or to sell a part of them in order to prevent the government from selling to other individuals a rent charge upon the whole. In some instances the right to receive the tax has been bought by individuals; in others you have sold part of the estates entailed upon your sons, in order to buy the property in the remainder. And, in all this you appear to have very quietly acquiesced! You now hear your *rents attacked*; not by the *people*, but by some of the Correspondents of the *Board of Agriculture*, which Board is a *Government Board*, and maintained at the public expence. Rents! These persons complain of your *high rents*; and they propose, that they should be *reduced*. They say, that high rents are the cause of the national misery, taking care to keep the Debt and Taxes and Change of Currency

out of sight; and, if they mean any thing practical, they must mean, that you ought to be *compelled* to lower your rents; or in other words, to surrender another large part of your estates! And yet, you appear to feel no sort of *alarm* at proceedings and propositions like these! You, wise*men that you are, are not to be awakened to a sense of danger by any thing but the expression of the people's wish to have a voice in the choosing of those who are to make laws and impose taxes!

That, if no change take place, your estates will pass away from you is not now attempted to be denied by any one who has the ability to put pen to paper. And, yet you remain stagnant as the weeds of Lethe! The operation of the *funding and army system* upon your estates is just as visible as the operation of lading water out of one bucket and putting into another; that is to say, it is thus visible to all eyes but yours; for, if it were visible to you, your conduct would denounce you as downright ideots, You see your incomes fall off; you see your tenants ruined; you see all the labourers become paupers; you are compelled to shut up your windows, to turn off your servants, to lay down your horses and carriages, to hang or drown your dogs, to cease all hospitality, and finally to abandon to the rain, the wind and the bats the mansions, in which you were born, and which, only in your immediate fathers' life times, were scenes of plenty, hilarity and happiness. You slide into some patched-up farm house and vainly hope, by assuming the occupation, to share in the profits, of the farmer; or you hide

your diminished heads in some gaudy box, where art is at strife with nature, in the skirts of the Metropolis, and where, instead of the voice of your hounds, you are cheered with the rumble of the convenient short coach which takes you to steal your politics while you are snapping up your dinner; or, unable to endure this degradation in the land of your forefathers, you decamp to some foreign shore, where, while you linger out, in a state of voluntary exile, a life of shabby gentility, your children imbibe the rudiments of that mongrel education, which well prepares them to wander through the world, cursed with poverty and pride, loaded with contempt and bereft of the benefits of compassion.

All this you know; all this you see before your eyes; all this many of you are now actually experiencing; and yet not a hand, not a tongue, have you moved in order to get rid of the cause of your ruin! If there be ten men, composing a community; if each has a certain portion of property; if two out of the ten contrive, by any means to appropriate to themselves a certain large part of the property of the other eight every year; is it not clear as day-light, that, in a very few years, the two must have *all the property*, and, of course, the eight have no property at all? And yet you will not see, that the Taxgatherer, who takes a large part of your incomes and hands it over to the Placemen, the Pensioners, the Grantees, the Fundholders, and the Army, are actually engaged in such a transfer! You will not see this; but you see dreadful dangers in a Reform

of the Parliament, which would very nearly put an end to the transfer!

Well! But you do see it. You see it and feel it. You know, that, in a short time, you must be ruined, if no change take place. The delusive hope, that it is *a sudden transition from war to peace* has been dispelled; you see that the cause is as permanent as the 60 millions of taxes and the 8 or 10 millions of poor-rates. You do, at last, confess, that the loss of your estates, of which I warned you more than ten years ago, has taken place in part and is now upon the eve of consummation. You wish not to be wholly stripped. You would, if you could, save the remnant of your property. Why, then, do you not join the *people*, who with undivided voice are praying for that change, which they look to as the only means of affording effectual present relief and future security, and which certainly is as necessary to you as to them?

The Press of Corruption call upon you to keep aloof upon these grounds: They say, that the standing army is necessary to preserve the peace of the country; that the present amount of Civil List, Sinécures, Pensions, Grants and Salaries is also necessary; and that, to reduce the interest of the Debt would be a *breach of national faith* and a *robbery*.

Now, the Reformers say, and I for one, that a Reform would cause the peace of the country never to be broken, or attempted to be broken, except in such a trifling degree as to be easily restored by peace-officers. We say, that, as to Sinécures, Pensions, &c. a Reformed Parliament would reduce them to the standard

of strict *public services*. We say, that, as to Salaries and Pay, they would be reduced in the proportion in which the wages of labourers and mechanics and manufacturers have been reduced. We say, that, if we were to stop here, the drain upon your estates would become *much less* than it is. But, I am not for stopping here. I am for making that reduction of the interest of the Debt, which has been stigmatized as a *breach of national faith*, and, by others, as a *robbery*; and, I will endeavour to prove, that it is neither one nor the other.

At several of the public meetings it has been resolved, that the Debt is *not national*; that those only owe the money, who have *voted* for those *who borrowed* the money; and that those who have filled the *seats* owe the Debt. Without attempting to enter into this question at present, I shall proceed to say, that those who have lent their money to the government were the best judges of the *security* they received for re-payment. They very well knew, that they had no other security than that which the power of collecting a sufficiency of taxes gave them; and, the simple question is, whether, in order to collect a sufficiency of taxes, the nation is bound to hazard the very lives of a great part of the people. I say, that it is not; I say, that the safety and happiness of millions is to be preferred to the safety and happiness of thousands; and, I say, that this is a principle that is consonant with every notion of justice and humanity.

But, let us look a little into the facts of this case. There are *some* of the Fundholders, who lent their money in a

currency one pound of which was equal in value to a pound of the present day; but, all those who lent the Government money after the stoppage of the Bank in 1797, lent no such a thing. They lent a *paper-money of inferior value*; and now, when the currency has been again raised in value, is the nation bound to pay the lenders as much of *this* paper as they lent of an *inferior paper*? If the lending had been in pieces of gold of *one ounce* weight each, would it be a *robbery* to make payment for ten pieces in five pieces of *two ounces* weight each? If the lending had been in bushels of wheat at 9s. a bushel, would it be a *robbery* to make payment for ten bushels in five bushels at 18s. each? And, though the price of wheat is now more than half what it used to be when the money was lent, this is merely owing to a *short crop*, and, if we take *all* the articles of produce, lean stock, meat, wool, flax, and corn, they do not sell for *half* the price they sold for when the main part of the money was borrowed. And yet they call it *robbery*, if we do not continue to pay *two for one*!

Nor had the *nation* any thing to do in changing the value of the currency. The Governor and Directors of the Bank Company were bound by law to pay the amount of their notes to the bearer upon demand *in gold and silver*. They issued such large quantities of Notes, that, in 1797, when the holders of the Notes went for payment, the Governor and Directors went to Pitt and told him *their fears for the safety of their concern*. Pitt procured an Order of Council authorising them to refuse to pay their notes! This was all *unlawful*; but, the Parliament passed an

act to protect the Governor and Directors and Pitt and the Council against the consequences of this great and memorable breach of the laws. This Bank Company are amongst the very greatest of the *Fundholders*, and they cry aloud about *breach of faith*, about *robbery*, because Mr. Preston and others have proposed to pay them no longer the value of two bushels of wheat for the value of one bushel of wheat!

The Bank paper, including the Country paper, which depended upon that of the London Bank, has now been more than half *drawn in*. Whose *fault* was that? Not the *nation's*. The nation had no hand in the stoppage of 1797, nor had it any hand in drawing in the paper. The whole has been done by those who manage the paper-money; and yet, the nation at large are to be called *robbers*, if they assert, that they ought not to be wholly ruined by the operations of these managers!

Let us take the case of the common *day-labourer*. Infinite pains have been taken by the sons of Corruption to persuade the labouring classes, that *they* do not pay any part of the *Debt*. Oh, no! great care is taken, these corrupt men tell them, *not to tax THEM*. Great care is taken to lay the weight upon the shoulders of those who are *able to bear it*. Great care is taken not to make the poor man contribute towards the support of the splendid *Sinecure Place-man* and *Pensioner*; and these corrupt men say, that the war, having been carried on for the *protection of property*, men of *property* are, and ought to be, liable to pay the interest of the

Debt which was contracted, that is to say, *the money that was borrowed and expended upon the war*. If this really were the case, and if the taxes paid by you and your yeomanry-cavalry tenants, did not at all affect the labouring classes, it would be a matter of much less consequence than it is. But, this is *not* the case. The Press of Corruption tell the labouring people a gross and wicked falsehood when it tells them, that they are not taxed. They *are* taxed, and pretty handsomely too. The Malt, Beer, Leather, Salt, Sugar, Tea, Tobacco, Soap, Candles, and Spirits, of which the farmer's man, the artizan, the mechanic, and the manufacturer, and their families, consume, and must consume, a very large part of all that is consumed in the country; these articles all pay a heavy tax, and, indeed, the taxes raised upon the *Malt, Hops, and Beer* alone amount to a greater sum, and a much greater sum, than the taxes on all the *Land* and all the *Houses*, all the *Windows*, all the *Carriages*, all the *Horses*, all the *Servants*, all the *Dogs*, and all the other taxes imposed on the rich and not on the poor. Let us, however, come to the *proof*; for this is a great matter. Let me go to *the Book*; the Book of all Books; the Book of Taxes! Here I have it before me. It is an account of what the Government received from the people in England, Scotland, and Wales, *during the last year of our lives*. It received, for the above-mentioned things, as follows:

	POUNDS.
For Beer, Hops and Malt	9,588,641
For Land, Houses, Windows, Carriages, Horses, Mules, Ser- vants, Bailiffs, Waiters, Pow- der Tax, Dogs, &c. &c. only	7,716,200

So that the Beer, Hops and Malt *alone*, which are chiefly used by those who are called the "*Lower Classes*," pay nearly one fourth part more every year than all the Land, Houses, Windows, and the other things just named. And, yet the Corrupt Press would fain make the Labouring Classes believe that *they* pay no taxes, and that *great care* has been taken not to lay any burdens upon those who are not well able to *bear them*! And, this is the reason, forsooth, why the *poor* ought not to have a vote at elections!

But. I am wandering from the point immediately before me, which was to show how the common day-labourer stands affected with regard to the *Debt*. The expences of the Government may be divided into two heads:—*First*, the army, navy, civil list, pensions, &c. and, *Second*, the Debt. The taxes required to pay the army, navy, &c. amount to about 22 millions a year; and the taxes required to pay the interest of the Debt to about 44 millions a year; so that the charge for the Debt is twice as great as the charge for every thing else. The commonest day-labourer pays, in taxes, according to Mr. PRESTON's computation, *ten pounds a year*, if he earn eighteen pounds a year, and, of course his ten pounds are divided nearly as follows:

	£	s.	d.
For Army, Civil List, &c.	3	6	8
For Debt	6	13	4
	10	0	0

Now, when the greater part of the Debt-money was borrowed, the labouring man used to receive at Botley from 15s. to 18s. a week; and he now receives only

from 9s. to 10s. a week. And, if we reckon the time that he now loses for *want of work*, which used never to be the case, his wages have, in fact, especially if we include the want of work for his wife and children, been *reduced one half*. And, is he still to pay the 6l. 13s. 4d. a year on account of the *Debt*? When the Debt-money was borrowed, it took only about *eight weeks' wages in the year* to pay his portion of the charge for the Debt; but now it takes *sixteen weeks' wages in the year*; and the Fundholder can have these sixteen weeks' wages for the same quantity of money that he could have had eight weeks' wages when the Debt-money was borrowed. And yet they call it a *robbery* to reduce the payment from sixteen weeks' wages to eight weeks' wages! Nay, they call it a *robbery* to reduce the Fundholder *one per cent*; that is to say, they call it a robbery to give him more than the amount of *twelve weeks' wages* for the *eight weeks' wages* which he lent to the government! This they stigmatize as a robbery; this they call a breach of national faith; against this they cry as loudly as parson Parks cried, the other day, against the "*horrid and diabolical plot*," which he had discovered in a hackney coach, and which consisted, I suppose, in the entwining of ribbons of colours red, white and blue!

It is impossible to take this view of the matter and not to be convinced, that things cannot go on in their present train for any length of time. The question, therefore, is not, whether all shall remain as it is or a change take place; for a change of *some sort* must take place;

and, the only question is, of *what sort* that change shall be.

I believe, that most men are convinced, that, if a Reform of the Parliament had taken place in 1792, we never should have seen a war against the people of France; that we should have suffered that people to settle their affairs in their own way; that we should not have expended *million after million* on the Bourbon fugitives and French aristocratic and ecclesiastical Emigrants, while our own list of paupers was increasing at so dreadful a rate; and that we should never have heard of votes for monuments to commemorate the *glory* of having restored the Bourbons and the Inquisition. I believe, that most men, high as well as low, are now convinced of this. I believe also, that the same conviction prevails as to the impossibility of sufficiently reducing the expences of the country, and, of course, the taxes, *without a Reform*. At any rate, the people, the great body of the people, are now most thoroughly convinced, that their miseries can never have an end, until this Reform shall take place. They now clearly see what are the real causes of their sufferings; they see that they arise from taxation and the management of the Paper-money; they have too much sense to believe that Soup-Kettles can form a permanent establishment, and too much spirit to endure the thought of living all their lives upon alms; they laugh, and well they may, at the idea of *Saving Banks*, where they are to provide for sickness and old age by putting by a penny or two a week, while each labourer is paying about four shillings a week in taxes. In short, they now, in

spite of all the endeavours to "*irritate and mislead*," clearly see their way, and are coolly and firmly pressing forward with petitions for *Reform*.

And, why are you alarmed at this?—Do you fear the consequences of putting an end to that mass of bribery and corruption and immorality of every sort, which now attend elections? How can you be injured by *annual parliaments* and *universal suffrage*? If the Members be really the choice of the people, what is it to you how often they are elected? Does *universal suffrage* frighten you? Why should it, if *universal taxation* does not? By the word *universal* it is impossible that we should mean *universal* in its *literal* sense. We often say, that "*all the world*" knows such or such a thing. But, by these words, we do not mean, that all the people in all countries, savages and all, know it. The word *universal* is made use of to save the repetition of a great many words. We explain, that we mean, that every *man*, who is of age, and who is untainted with any infamous crime, should have a vote; and, when we have so clearly shown, that even the common day-labourer is so heavily *taxed*, we wait to hear the arguments to prove that he ought not to be permitted to have a vote in the choosing of those by whom he is so taxed, and such arguments we have not yet heard.

The *practicability* is all that can possibly remain in doubt, for the *justice* of the thing is clear. Some persons, very sincere and very able friends of Reform, are disposed to stop at *house-holders*; that is to say, all men who are masters of a house, or occupy a house, whether

they pay any *direct* rates or taxes, or whether they do not. This would be doing a great deal; for, as it would include all cottagers and all married journeymen, it would, perhaps, satisfy the people. But, certainly, nothing one inch short of this ever will satisfy them; and, in this case, the *ballot* appears necessary to preserve the free exercise of this invaluable right; for, without the ballot, what is to protect the farmer and the householder against their landlord? In America, where so very small a part of the farmers are *tenants*, and where the labouring classes are so very independent, they have still adhered to the ballot, which, besides the protection it affords to tenants and other dependent persons, has the excellent effect, in many cases, of preventing strife amongst neighbours and relations. The ABBÉ MABLY, a French writer of great eminence, in his Letters to Mr. JOHN ADAMS on the American Constitutions, finds fault of the *ballot*, as being a provision against an *evil that ought not to exist*; and he predicts, that it will tend to *degrade* the people. He wrote in 1786; but, his prediction has not yet been fulfilled. However, I would break with nobody on the subject of the *ballot*, nor do I believe the petitioners in general would. I have confidence enough in the honesty and spirit of my countrymen to believe that without the ballot, they would act as became freeman.

But, after all, let us have the subject *fairly discussed*; let a *Bill* be brought in, and let us when we see its provisions, examine whether they be good or bad. Let free discussion take place, and I will engage, that we arrive at the truth. And, what

has any one, who means rightly, to *fear* from such a reform? It contemplates no hostility to any lawful prerogative or privilege; but, on the contrary, it fully contemplates the real enjoyment of both by those who are entitled to them. Are you afraid, that such a Reform would fill the Commons', or People's, House with low and foolish men? If you are, upon what are your fears founded? Has a representative system, from top to toe, produced this effect in America? No: the four persons who have been *Presidents*, Messrs. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, were the four men most distinguished in their country for political talent and wisdom, equal to any men upon earth as to private character, and all of them possessing estates, to which, *un- augmented*, they retired at the termination of their public duties. The two Houses of Congress are filled, with very few exceptions, by men of *some fortune* as well as men of distinguished talent. Why, then, should you suppose, that the people of England, if free to choose, would fix *their* choice on men of *no property* and *no talent*!

But, are you afraid, that the king would be compelled to put his authority into the hands of men having no *noble blood* in their veins, and that, thus, the ancient families of the kingdom would have the shame of submitting to the sway of up-starts? Before you express such a fear, you should ask yourselves, who and whence came those who have this sway in their hands now. The Lord Chancellor is the son of a Coal-Merchant; Lord Sidmouth the son of a Doctor of Physic; Lord Liverpool the son of a very

clever man, who was once a writer in reviews and other such publications; Mr. Vansittart was, not many years ago, a Sessions Lawyer in Berkshire; Mr. Canning's origin I have no certain trace of; Mr. Huskisson is a farmer's son, and has been an Apothecary or Banker's Clerk; and our worthy friend Old George Rose, at whose heels the Baronets and 'Squires of Hampshire follow like well-trained spaniels, was a Purser in the Navy. Come, come, then! Cheer up! Don't be frightened! What is it that has raised these men, and many others who could be mentioned, to such a height of power? Why, their application to business; their industry; their store of knowledge calculated for the purposes of supporting the system; their superior talents of the sort that are required to carry on that which they are wanted to carry on. If, therefore, the notion of attaching importance to mere *birth* were to be admitted to be wise instead of being foolishness itself, what have you to fear on this score from the proposed Reform? Nay, I see no reason at all, why the present ministers, with an exception or two, should not remain as they are. A reformed parliament would certainly leave the king perfectly unfettered in his choice; and, it is the evils of the present system that we want to get rid of, and not of the *men* who carry it on. For, as you must have observed, amongst all the numerous petitions for Reform, not one expresses a wish to produce a *change of the ministers*. The WHIG press has been, indeed, labouring at this point; but, its efforts have been so contemptible in point of effect, that not a single petition con-

tains any such thought. Pitt, in his better days, and before his connection with Dundas, said, that without a reform of the parliament, no minister in England could be *honest*, by which he meant, I suppose, that no minister could act freely and effectually for the good of the country; and this appears to be the opinion of the people.

Now, then, if no other considerations had any weight with you, do you not perceive, that there is danger to yourselves in keeping aloof from so many thousands and hundreds of thousands of sturdy men as are now so eagerly seeking for the accomplishment of this great wish of their hearts? You cannot deny, if the question be put home to you, that you *lament* the events of the last twenty-five years. You cannot say, that you believe the present distress and misery to be *temporary*. You cannot point to any ground of *hope* of an alteration for the better, if the present system be persevered in. You can hardly endure the idea of seeing your estates wholly pass away from you. And, if you were, or are, insensible to every other feeling, do you not dread the thought of being held in contempt or abhorrence by the Labouring Classes? And yet, must not this be the case, if you still resolve to keep aloof? They have, every where, with their accustomed deference to their superiors in rank and property, been anxiously looking towards those superiors. They have respectfully urged *them* to take the lead; and, they have, every where except at Nottingham and Norwich and in the County of Cornwall, met with refusal, and, in some cases, with insult and abuse. This;

however, has not prevented them from exercising their right of petition, and, in their cool, decorous and able manner of doing it, they have given those superiors a lesson which ought to be a warning to them in future. That men should, by false pride, be rendered so stupid as to cast away proffered influence and power would appear incredible were not the fact attested by undeniable evidence. At CARLISLE the Labouring Classes have made a formal and written application to their employers to place themselves at their head in the work of petitioning. The document is curious and interesting, and is as follows. The application appears to have been a *Circular*.

“SIR,—We the Operative — in your
 “employ, considering the necessity of a
 “Reform in Parliament to be the only
 “means of relieving the present existing
 “distress of the country, *call upon you to*
 “*come forward along with your Brother*
 “*Manufacturers of other Trades in call-*
 “*ing a General Public meeting to express*
 “*the grievances which the people lie*
 “*under and the necessity of Redress.—*
 “Sir,—It is the full intention of the Peo-
 “ple to Petition the King, likewise the
 “Legislature—and if you absolutely re-
 “fuse to act in a public capacity in the
 “business, we shall be *under the dis-*
 “*agreeable necessity of taking the cause*
 “*in hand ourselves—But we fondly hope*
 “*you will accede to our reasonable re-*
 “*quest and come forward to use every*
 “*lawful means in your power to redress*
 “*your own grievances and the grievances*
 “*of your Servants.*

“And Your *Petitioners will ever*
 “*Pray.*”

Now, I should be glad to know, what proceeding could be more proper, more

sensible than this? What more reasonable, what more fair and honest? And yet, it appears, that the Employers, though *not* with insult and abuse, declined the invitation upon the vague assertion, that, “*no benefit* could be expected to result” from such a public meeting. The *insult* and *abuse* were left to be supplied by the proprietor of the COURIER, who was once himself a *journeyman taylor*, and who now, affecting airs of *high-blood*, treats these sensible, modest and suffering people as if they were so many curs, fit to be fed only on carrion. Do you think, that THIS is the way to conciliate the people, to cheer them with hope, to induce them to exercise fortitude and patience, and to strengthen the natural ties which bind them to their superiors in rank and wealth? No: but it is the way to burst those ties asunder and to destroy them for ever. A Reform will take place, or it will not. If it do not, if it be finally refused, and that, too, as these vile writers would recommend, without a fair and full and candid hearing, what disappointment, what heart-burnings, what hatreds, what resentments, what combustibles are here gathering together! And, if it do take place, in what contempt will the mass of the people hold those whom they, with that modesty which is inseparable from true courage, now look up to as their superiors! And, therefore, in keeping aloof from the people in this the hour of their distress and anxiety, are you acting the part of men who from a just estimate of the means of preserving even your own property and character, to say nothing of the peace, happiness, and

power of our country, which might as far surpass all others in prosperity as it does in enterprize, talent, and renown?

The country, instead of being disturbed, as the truly *seditions* writers on the side of Corruption would fain make us believe; instead of being "*irritated*" by the agitation of the question of Reform, is kept, by the hope, which Reform holds out to it, in a state of tranquillity, wholly unparalleled in the history of the world, under a similar pressure of suffering. Of this fact, the sad scenes at Dundee are a strong and remarkable instance. At the great and populous towns of Norwich, Manchester, Paisley, Glasgow, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool, and many, many others, where the people are suffering in a degree that makes the heart sink within one to think of, they have had their meetings to petition for Reform; they have agreed on petitions; hope has been left in their bosoms; they have been inspired with patience and fortitude; and *all is tranquil*. But, at Dundee, where a *partial meeting* had been held early in November, and *where a gentleman who moved for Reform had been borne down*, there violence has broken forth, houses have been plundered, and property and life exposed to all sort of perils, and this, too, amongst the sober, the sedate, the reflecting, the prudent, the moral people of Scotland!

One would think, that this instance alone would rouse you from your unac-

countable state of torpidity. The pensioned Burke insolently said, that the King held his crown *in contempt* of the Reformers of 1789. You cannot hold your property *in contempt* of the people; and, if you could do it, what would your property be worth? Yet, every day that passes over your heads, is, by your keeping aloof, separating you more and more widely from the people, the great mass of whom are well convinced, that you have only to place yourselves at their head to obtain for them the full accomplishment of their wishes; and, what is more, they would be satisfied with *less* if speedily obtained by your assistance.

Thus, it appears to me, that every consideration, whether as to self or to country, calls on you to come forth and cordially join in the work of obtaining a Reform. — The approaching session of parliament will, if I am not much deceived, be the most important that this country ever saw, Its measures will finally pronounce on *your* fate; and, what sort of fate that will be will wholly depend on yourselves.

WM. COBBETT.

The next Register will contain an Address to the CLERGY. Also the Sequel of the SURPRIZING PLOTS.